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SELECT EPISTLES

ON SEVERAL

Moral Subjects.

Newly Tranſlated from the LATIN of

L. ANNÆUS SENECA.

WITH

Select NOTES from JUSTUS LIPSIUS.

By a GENTLEMAN *of* Chriſt-Church, Oxon.

LONDON:

Printed for C. RIVINGTON, at the *Bible* and *Crown* in St. *Paul*'s *Church-yard*. M.DCC.XXXIX.

[Price One Shilling.]

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SELECT

SELECT EPISTLES FROM *SENECA.*

EPIST. I.

The ARGUMENT.

Seneca *adviſes* Lucilius *not to read a great many Authors, but to make himſelf thoroughly Maſter of a few; and always to collect ſomething from them, and fix it in his Mind. He tells him that he does ſo himſelf; and recommends to him a fine Sentence concerning Poverty, which he had gather'd from* Epicurus.

I CONCEIVE good Hopes of you, both from what you write to Me, and from what I hear concerning You. I find that you are not inclinable to rove, or to put yourſelf to the unneceſſary Trouble of moving from Place to Place. To be ſo volatile and unſettled,

ſettled, is a Sign of great Weakneſs of Mind. To be able to continue eaſy in one certain Place, and bear to be alone, is, as I take it, the principal Token, by which we may judge whether the Mind be ſteady and compos'd. But whilſt you profeſs to read a great many Authors, and to be converſant with all Sorts of Books, conſider with yourſelf, whether you don't diſcover ſomething of that wandring and unſtable Diſpoſition. You ſhould cloſely apply yourſelf to ſome of the fineſt Writers, and endeavour perfectly to reliſh them, if you would derive from them any ſuch Advantage, as may make a laſting Impreſſion on your Mind. He who is every where, is no-where. They who ſpend their Time in Travelling, have many Hoſts, but no Friends. And thus it is with thoſe, who, in Reading, don't make themſelves intimately acquainted with any one Author; but haſtily run over ſeveral, and quickly forget what they have read. The Food which we preſently diſgorge, affords no Nouriſhment to the Body. Too frequent a Change of Remedies, is a great Hindrance to the Recovery of our Health; nor is a Wound capable of being heal'd, whilſt different Medicines are too often tried upon it. And a Tree, which has ſeveral times been tranſplanted, will not take any deep Root.

There are no Authors ſo uſeful and inſtructive, as to be of any Service to us, if but lightly and ſuperficially paſs'd over. It does but diſſipate the Mind, to read a Multitude

titude of Books. Since then you cannot, to any Purpoſe, read ſo many as you might poſſibly have, it will be ſufficient for you to have only ſo many as you can profitably read.

But you tell me, that you take a Pleaſure in turning over ſometimes one Book, and ſometimes another. Now it is a ſure Indication of a weak and diſorder'd Stomach, to be taſting of a great many Diſhes at once; the Diverſity of which does but the more viciate it, inſtead of nouriſhing and ſtrengthening it. And therefore, be always reading a few of the moſt approved Authors: And if at any Time you have a Fancy to divert yourſelf with looking into others, you may do ſo for a while, and then return to the former. Let no Day paſs without acquiring ſome freſh Aſſiſtance, to enable you to bear Poverty, or Death, or any other of the Evils of Life. And when you have gone thro' ſeveral Inſtructions for accompliſhing thoſe Ends, ſingle out ſome one of them, which on that Day you may thoroughly digeſt.

This is the Rule which I myſelf obſerve. Out of ſeveral Things which I read, I fix upon ſomething in particular. I have this Day made choice of a Sentence from *Epicurus*: For I * ſometimes paſs over into the Enemy's Camp, not as a Deſerter, but as a Spy. *A chearful and contented Poverty*, ſays

* He means, That he ſometimes reads the Writings of different Sects of Philoſophers. *Seneca* was moſtly an Admirer and Follower of the *Stoicks*.

He, *is a very honourable Thing.* But indeed, *That* is no longer Poverty, which is attended with Chearfulneſs and Content. For He to whom Poverty is agreeable, is in Reality rich. He is not poor who has but little, but he who inſatiably covets ſtill more. For what ſignifies it how much Treaſure a Man has in his Cheſts, how much Corn in his Barns, how many Flocks and Herds in his Fields, or how much Money at Uſe, if he is greedily deſirous of ſeizing upon his Neighbour's Poſſeſſions; and conſiders not ſo much what he has already acquired, as what he propoſes ſtill to acquire? Would you know what is the proper Meaſure of Riches? It is, in the firſt Place, that which is neceſſary for the Support of Life; and, in the ſecond, that which is ſufficient for the Comforts and Conveniencies of it.

EPIST. II.

The ARGUMENT.

The Author acquaints his Friend, That he had made great Proficiency in Philoſophy; and, as an Argument of this, that he was ſenſible of his own Faults: That he would communicate to Him, as to a true Friend, whatever uſeful Inſtructions he had learnt; and that it was the Property of a wiſe Man ſo to do: And that the Company of good Men

is

is more effectual than Precepts, to incite others to Virtue: Which he ſhews, by producing the Examples of ſome Philoſophers.

I AM ſenſible, my dear *Lucilius*, that I am not only become wiſer and better, but that I am, as it were, transform'd into a quite different Perſon from what I was before: but I dare not aſſure myſelf, or even pretend to hope, that there remains nothing in me that does not want to be alter'd. For why ſhould I think that I have no vicious Inclination to be corrected and ſubdu'd, no exorbitant Paſſion to be reſtrain'd and depreſs'd, or no Meanneſs of Spirit to be rais'd and exalted? And this very Thing is an Argument of the Mind's being chang'd for the better, that it now perceives its own Faults, which, as yet, it was ignorant of. There are ſome Sorts of ſick Perſons, whom we congratulate when they become ſenſible that they are ſick. I ſhould therefore be glad if I could make You partake of that ſudden Alteration, which I find in myſelf. I ſhould then begin to have a greater Aſſurance of the Continuance of our Friendſhip; of that * true Friendſhip, I mean, which neither Hope, nor Fear, nor the Care we have of our own Intereſts, will be able to diſſolve; of that which Men preſerve inviolable till their Death, and for

* See the firſt Paragraph of *Epiſt.* XII. in this Collection.

which

which they would even be willing to die. I could eaſily name to you ſeveral Perſons, who did not want Friends, but who wanted, or rather were unſuſceptible of, the Benefits of true Friendſhip. This cannot be the Caſe, when an equal Inclination to deſire only what is honeſt, and honourable, is the Motive which induces Perſons to unite themſelves in this ſtrict Society. And why ſhould it not do ſo, ſince they know that they ſhall be Sharers with one another in all the Satisfactions, and, which is more, in all the Adverſities of Life?

You will ſcarce be able to conceive, what Improvements I every Day make in myſelf. Send me then, you will ſay, ſome Account of the Means, which you have found to be ſo efficacious in producing this Change in you. I wiſh, indeed, that I could transfuſe them all into you. The greateſt Pleaſure I take in learning any Thing, is, that I may be able to teach it to others: Nor ſhould I delight in any Part of Knowledge, however excellent and uſeful, if I myſelf only were to know it. Upon Suppoſition, that I had the Offer of having all manner of Wiſdom infus'd into me, provided that I would keep it ſecret to myſelf, I would immediately reject it. It can't be agreeable to us to be poſſeſs'd of any Good, or to enjoy any Advantage, unleſs we have ſome one to partake with us in it. I will therefore ſend to you the very Books from whence I have deriv'd ſuch ſalutary

tary Inſtructions: And that you may not put yourſelf to too much Pains in ſearching for what will be moſt beneficial to you, I will ſet a Mark for you upon the Places which I moſt eſteem and admire.

But here I muſt acknowledge, that it will be of leſs Service to you to peruſe the Works of the Dead, than it will be, not only to hearken to the Voice of the Living, but alſo to be conſtantly in the Company of wiſe and learned Men: And therefore you ſhould come hither upon the preſent Occaſion; firſt, becauſe Men give more Credit to their Eyes, than to their Ears; and, ſecondly, becauſe the Way is long by Precepts, but ſhort and eaſy by Examples.

Cleanthes would not have ſo well reſembled *Zeno*, if he had contented himſelf with only hearing him: He alſo liv'd with him; he ſaw how he liv'd; he obſerv'd his private Conduct; he ſtudied all his Actions, and conſider'd whether they were conformable to the Rules he had laid down. *Plato*, and [1] *Ariſtotle*, and thoſe other Philoſophers, who afterwards divided themſelves into ſo many different Sects, learnt more from the Life and Manners of *Socrates*, than they did from his Words.

[1] This muſt needs be an Error, either in *Seneca* himſelf, or in the Tranſcribers of his Works. *Ariſtotle* was ſo far from living with *Socrates*, that he never ſo much as ſaw him. For *Socrates*, as moſt of the Learned hold, died in the firſt Year of the 95th Olympiad, or, as *Diodorus* in particular relates, of the 97th. But *Ariſtotle* was born in the firſt Year

Words. And it was not ſo much the School, as the Company of *Epicurus*, which made [2] *Metrodorus*, and [3] *Hermachus*, and [4] *Polyænus* to become great Men.

But I don't ſend for you only that you yourſelf may make a good Proficiency, but alſo, that you may be a Means of promoting mine; for herein we ſhall contribute very much to the Service of each other. In the mean time, ſince I promis'd to ſend you, in each Letter, ſome particular Sentence, which, in my reading, had made a more than ordinary Impreſſion upon me, I ſhall acquaint you what I was this Day very much pleas'd with in *Hecaton: Would you know*, ſays He, *what Proficiency I have made? I have begun to be a Friend to myſelf.* This, indeed, was no ſmall Proficiency; for he might then be aſſur'd, that he ſhould never be quite *alone*: And you may depend upon it, that he who is a Friend to Himſelf, is a Friend to all Mankind.

Year of the 99th Olympiad, that is, ſeven Years after the Death of *Socrates*; as is reported, not only by *Laertius*, but alſo by *Dionyſius*, *Agellius*, and *Euſebius*.

[2] There were two Perſons of this Name, who both were *Epicurus*'s Scholars. The firſt was *Metrodorus* of *Stratonica*, who afterwards embraced the Opinions of *Carneades*, who was the Chief of the Sect of the *New Academicks*; the other, an *Athenian*, who perſever'd in *Epicurus*'s Notions, and propagated them in ſeveral Books. *Seneca* means this latter.

[3] He was the Son of *Agemarchus* of *Mitylene*; and, as *Diogenes Laertius* tells us, ſucceeded *Epicurus* in his School.

[4] He was the Son of *Athenodorus* of *Lampſacus*; and was alſo *Epicurus*'s Scholar, but died before his Maſter.

EPIST. III.

The ARGUMENT.

Seneca *ſhews, that the true Joy reſults from the Contempt of external and caſual Things, from a good Conſcience, and from an uniform Tenor of Life; and that He lives ill, who is ſtill but beginning to live.*

YOU expect, perhaps, that I ſhould acquaint you, that we have had a very mild and ſhort Winter; and that the Spring is very unfavourable, and extraordinarily cold; together with ſuch other Trifles as ſome Men think ſufficient to fill up their Letters with: But I rather chuſe to write ſomething which may be of Service to us Both. And what can be more uſeful, than to exhort you to take Care that you may always have a ſound Mind? Do you ask what is the Foundation of this? It is, Not to rejoice in vain Things. The *Foundation* did I ſay? It is rather the very Top and Completion of it. *He* is arriv'd to this Heighth, who knows what he ought to rejoice in, and who, placing his Happineſs in Himſelf alone, does not let it be in the Power of any external Things to diſturb it. *He* muſt ſtill be ſolicitous, and depend upon Caſualties, whoſe Fancy is pleas'd and allur'd by any *Hope*, even tho' he has a near Proſpect of what he hopes for, tho' it be

not difficult to be obtain'd, and tho' hitherto he has always had good Succeſs in what he propos'd to himſelf. This then, my *Lucilius*, is the firſt Advice I would give you; *Learn how to rejoice.*

You will tell me, that I debar you of a great many Pleaſures, by forbidding you to take Delight in any thing that is precarious, and adviſing you to abandon your Hopes, which are very agreeable Amuſements to the Mind. Nay but, on the contrary, I would never have you deſtitute of Joy: But I would have it to be of your own Growth, and to ariſe from within yourſelf. Other Joys are but light; they may ſmooth the Forehead, but they do not fill the Breaſt; unleſs, perhaps, you think a Man to be joyful, becauſe he laughs. It is the Mind which muſt be chearful, and couragious, and elevated above all external Affairs. Believe me, true Joy is a ſevere Thing. Do you think that a Man with a gay and ſmiling Countenance, and, as affected Perſons love to ſpeak, with a *ſweet* and *engaging* Eye, will be ready to deſpiſe Death? to give a welcome Reception to Poverty? to reſtrain his diſorderly Affections? and to diſpoſe himſelf to Patience under Pain? He who meditates upon theſe Things, is affected with a *great*, but with no very *blandiſhing* Joy. This is the Joy which I would have you poſſeſs yourſelf of. It will never fail you, if you can once find it pure and unmuddied at its Fountain-Head.

The

The Metals which are of little Value, are eaſy to be found, as being commonly very near the Surface of the Earth: But the Vein of thoſe which are of an extraordinary Price, is uſually hid very deep in the Ground; and the farther you dig for them, the more fully they will anſwer your Pains. All that the Vulgar eſteems, is but trifling and light; and if it affords any Pleaſure, it is but ſuperficial, and does not penetrate into the Soul. There is no ſtable Foundation for that Joy, which comes only from external Things. That which I am ſpeaking to you of, and to which I am endeavouring to conduct you, is real, and ſolid, and deeply rooted in the Mind.

Would you then, my deareſt *Lucilius*, render yourſelf eaſy and happy? There is but one Way of doing it; and that is, by deſpiſing all the ſplendid Vanities, which are apt to dazzle the Eyes of the Generality of Men; by ſlighting all that the World can promiſe you, in the Enjoyment of outward Things; by regarding only the true Good, and rejoicing ſolely in what is your own.

But what is it, you will ſay, that I can thus call my own? It is that which proceeds from yourſelf, and from the better Part of you. As to the Body, tho' it be the neceſſary Organ or Inſtrument, by which the Soul is in a great Meaſure forced to act, yet you are to look upon it as by far the leſs valuable Part of your Being. The Pleaſures it yields are but vain, and endure but a ſhort

Time; they are often follow'd by Repentance, and oft', unleſs they be us'd with a great deal of Diſcretion, they are chang'd into their Contraries. What I tell you is certainly true. Such Pleaſure is, as it were, upon a *Precipice*; and, unleſs you keep it within due Bounds, it preſently ſinks into Pain. Now it is very difficult ſo to reſtrain it, when you think it to be a real Good; whereas an eager Deſire after the true Good, is always ſafe and ſecure.

What then is the true Good? and from whence does it ariſe? It ſprings from a good Conſcience, from virtuous Intentions, from upright Actions, from a Contempt of caſual Things, and from a gentle and continued Tenor of Life, never deviates from the right Way. For how is it poſſible, that they who preſently quit one Deſign to purſue another, or elſe do not purſue any Deſign at all, but ſuffer themſelves to be diſpos'd of according to the Will of Fortune, being always fluctuating and irreſolute, ſhould ever come to have any Steadineſs and Conſtancy in them? There are but few who govern themſelves, or conduct their Affairs, with any deliberate Counſel. Moſt Men don't go forward, but are carried on, like thoſe Things which we ſee floating upon a River; ſome of which, by a gentler Stream, are convey'd ſmoothly down; ſome, by a more rapid one, are violently hurried along; ſome, where the Water moves ſlowly, are lodg'd

lodg'd, perchance, upon the neareſt Bank; and ſome, where it runs with an impetuous Torrent, are driven quite into the Sea. We ſhould therefore form to ourſelves ſome Reſolution, and then perſevere in it.

But it is Time to diſcharge the Debt I owe you, by concluding my Letter, as uſual, with ſome remarkable Sentence. I ſhall take it from *Epicurus*, of whom you are an Admirer. *It is a burdenſome Thing*, ſays He, *to be always beginning to live.* Or, perhaps, the Senſe of it may be better expreſſed thus: *He lives ill, who is ſtill but beginning to live.* Perhaps you ask the Reaſon for this, and think that the Poſition wants ſome Explanation. It is, becauſe his Life is ſtill imperfect; and becauſe there is no Probability, that he who is but beginning to live, can prepare himſelf to die. This then ſhould be our earneſt Endeavour, that at all Times we may have liv'd enough. Such a Reflection does not enter into the Mind of Him, who is as yet but propoſing to live. There is no Occaſion for you to imagine that there are but few ſuch Inſtances to be met with; ſince almoſt all Men are ſuch. Some do not begin to live, till their Life is juſt at an End. If you think this to be ſtrange, I will add, what will ſeem to be ſtill more wonderful to you: Some have even ceaſed to live, before they have yet begun.

EPIST. IV.

The ARGUMENT.

The Philoſopher here ſhews, that the Change of Places, is of no Benefit to the Mind of thoſe who carry their Vices along with them; that the Neighbourhood of the Forum *is to be avoided; and, that the firſt Step to Amendment, is to be ſenſible of one's Faults.*

YOU tell me, that you wonder why, in ſo many Voyages as you have made, and ſo many Places as you have been at, you have not been able to ſhake off your melancholy Humour. Do you think that You are the only Perſon to whom this has happened? It is your *Mind* which you muſt change, and not the *Air*. Tho' you ſhould paſs over the main Ocean never ſo often, and in your Paſſage ſee, as * *Virgil* expreſſes it,

——— *the Land and Towns retire;*

yet, wherever you go, your Vices will follow you. It was thus that *Socrates* replied to to a Perſon, who was complaining to him of this very Thing: *Why do you wonder that your Travels are of no Benefit to you, ſince you carry Yourſelf about with you?* The ſame Cauſe which made you leave your native Soil, ſtill

* *Æn.* III. 72.

hangs

hangs as a heavy Weight upon you. What Good does it do you to ſee Countries which are new to you, and to get acquainted with Cities and Places which before you had no Knowledge of? You do but fatigue yourſelf to no Purpoſe. Would you know from whence it comes, that you gain no Advantage by flying from hence? It is, becauſe you cannot fly from Yourſelf. You muſt lay aſide the Burthen which depreſſes your Mind; otherwiſe, you will never be eaſy in any Place whatſoever. You may reckon yourſelf to be now in a Condition like that of the *Sibyl* in * *Virgil*, when the Fit of Enthuſiaſm ſeizes her, and ſhe is greatly mov'd within her, by a Spirit not her own:

> Apollo's *ſwelling Prieſteſs wildly raves*;
> *Reluctant, lab'ring from her Breaſt to heave*
> *Th' incumbent God.* ——————

You wander from Place to Place, as thinking thereby to caſt off the Load, which ſits ſo uneaſy upon you; but the more you toſs it about, the more cumberſome it is: As in a Ship, the ſeveral Cargo's, which lie cloſe and unmov'd together, are leſs burthenſome and dangerous to it; but thoſe which are looſely thrown into it, and by that means are ſoon ſhaken from one Place to another, are apt, by their unequal Weight, to ſink it on

* *Æn.* VI. 78, 79. tranſlated by Dr. *Trapp*.

that

that Side, to which they moſtly incline. What you are doing, you do againſt Yourſelf: The very Motion hurts you, as being too violent for ſuch an indiſpoſed Perſon as You. But when once you ſhall have remov'd the Cauſe of your Diſorder, whatever Place you go to, it will become pleaſant to you. Then, tho' you were baniſh'd to the utmoſt Limits of the Earth, or confin'd in the moſt barbarous Region of it, yet even There you would find Hoſpitality. It is not Whither you go, but What Sort of Perſon you go, which is of the greateſt Importance to your Repoſe. We are not to think, that the Mind can be reſtrain'd to any particular Place. With This Perſuaſion we ought to live, That we were not born for any one Corner of the Earth, but that the whole World is our Country. If you were thoroughly convinc'd of this, you would not wonder that, tho' when you have been weary of one Region, you have preſently paſs'd into another; yet all this Diverſity of Countries has been of no Service to you. You would have been ſatisfied with any one of them, if you had thought them all to have been your own. Inſtead of travelling, you do but ramble, or rather, are hurried about, and are to-day in one Place, and to-morrow in another; when that which you are ſeeking after, namely, to live well, is any-where to be found.

What

What can be a more noiſy and turbulent Place of Abode, than the * *Forum?* And yet even He who is obliged to live There, may find Means to enjoy a perfect Tranquillity. But I muſt own, that ſo long as I ſhall have the Liberty of chuſing where to dwell, it ſhall be as far as I can from the Sight and Neighbourhood of that Place. For as there is no Conſtitution ſo healthy, as not to be endanger'd by a bad Air; ſo, when a virtuous Mind has not yet arriv'd to its full Strength and Maturity, there are ſome Things and Places which it is not very proper for it to be converſant with. I am of a quite different Opinion from thoſe, who voluntarily throw themſelves into the midſt of the Waves; I mean, who are fond of being always in a Tumult, and are never ſo well pleas'd, as when they are forcing their Way through Difficulties. A *Wiſe Man* will, upon Occaſion, *bear* with ſuch Things, but he will never *chuſe* them; and he had much rather live in a State of Peace, than run himſelf unneceſſarily into the Dangers of War. And indeed, what avails it for a Man to have diſengag'd himſelf from his own Vices, if he muſt ſtill be contending with thoſe of others? You will tell me, that *Socrates* was beſet by thirty Tyrants, but that all of them were not able to biaſs or corrupt him. What ſignifies it how many Maſters we have to

* The Place where the Courts of Judicature were held.

do with? A baſe and abject Servitude is ſtill but one and the ſame Thing. Whoever can deſpiſe That, tho' he has never ſo many Maſters, he ſtill is *free*.

It is now Time for me to conclude, according to my Cuſtom, with ſome very uſeful and remarkable Sentence. It ſhall be this: *The firſt Step to Amendment, is to be ſenſible of one's Faults.* It is taken from *Epicurus*, and, in my Opinion, it is a very fine one. For he who does not know that he offends, will not bear to be reprov'd. You muſt diſcover your own Faults, before you can amend them. There are ſome who even glory in their Vices: And can it be imagin'd that They have the leaſt Thought of reforming their Lives, who take thoſe Vices to be Virtues? And therefore, do whatever lies in your Power to *convict* Yourſelf. Make a ſtrict Scrutiny into your Conduct: And ſo, firſt, be your own Accuſer; and then, your own Judge; and finally, your own Solicitor, to obtain Pardon of Yourſelf: Which I would not have you eaſily grant, when you are ſenſible that you deſerve to be ſeverely puniſhed.

EPIST.

EPIST. V.

The ARGUMENT.

Seneca *commends* Lucilius's *Solitude and Retirement; and exhorts him to let no one rob him of his Time, which is ſo tranſient and ſhort; and to deſpiſe all vulgar Wiſhes.*

I ENQUIRE of all thoſe who come from the * Province where you are, what you are doing, and what Company you keep. It is impoſſible for you to deceive me, who am thus, as it were, preſent with you. I would have you live ſo, as if I heard of every minute Circumſtance of whatever you do, and even actually ſaw it. Would you know what pleaſes me beſt of what I hear concerning you? It is, that I hear nothing of you; or at leaſt, that moſt of thoſe whom I ſpeak to about you, can give me no particular Account of you. The beſt Means of guarding yourſelf againſt my Enquiries, is not to converſe with Perſons who are of a Temper different from your own, and who are fond of what You deſpiſe. I have ſuch Confidence in you, as to think that, tho' never ſo many Perſons ſhould ſolicit you, they would not be able to make you ſwerve from your Reſolution.

* Namely, *Sicily*, of which *Lucilius* was made Deputy-Governor.

What then am I afraid of? Not leſt a Variety of Company ſhould pervert you, but leſt it ſhould interrupt you, and ſteal away your Time. Our Life is ſo ſhort, that he does us a great Injury, whoever retards us in our Endeavours to live well. And we make it ſtill ſhorter by our own Inconſtancy, ſince we have no ſooner undertaken one Buſineſs, but we quit it to begin another; and thus we *rend*, as it were, into leſſer and leſſer Pieces that ſmall Portion of Life, which comes to our Share.

Make haſte then, my dear *Lucilius*, and conſider, how you would quicken your Pace, if you had an Enemy at your Back, who purſu'd you with his Sword in his Hand. This is really the Caſe with you. You are thus purſu'd, and therefore muſt haſten to ſecure yourſelf. Put yourſelf out of the Reach of Danger, and frequently reflect, what a glorious Thing it is to have *finiſh'd* one's Life, as to all the true Ends and Purpoſes of living, long before one's Death! and then to expect the reſt of one's Days with a Soul undiſturb'd by any ſolicitous Apprehenſions, in perfect Tranquillity and Repoſe! Such a Life, by how much the longer it is, is not by ſo much the happier. O when will you ſee the Time, in which you will be ſufficiently ſenſible, that the Prolongation of your Life is not at all to be regarded! when you will be entirely eaſy and ſedate, and, without troubling yourſelf about adding another Day to the

the preſent, will think that you have already liv'd enough!

Would you know from whence it comes, that Men are ſo deſirous of the future? It is becauſe as yet they are not Maſters of themſelves. Of all the Things, of which your Parents wiſh that you may have an Abundance, I had much rather that you ſhould have a Contempt. In thoſe *Wiſhes* at leaſt, they impoveriſh a great many Others, that ſo they may enrich You: For whatever they would transfer to You, muſt be taken from ſome other Perſon. On the contrary, I wiſh that you may have an entire Government of yourſelf; that being freed from all wandring and fluctuating Thoughts, which put your Soul into a Diſorder, you may at length be ſtedfaſt and fix'd; and that you may fully content yourſelf with underſtanding what are the true Goods, (which are no ſooner underſtood than poſſeſs'd,) without deſiring any longer Life, than Nature is pleas'd to afford you. Whoever lives after having thus *finiſh'd* his Life, may boaſt that he is *free*, and that no Neceſſity is capable of putting a Conſtraint upon him.

EPIST. VI.

The ARGUMENT.

He expreſſes his particular Joy upon Lucilius's *Proficiency in Virtue, becauſe He was his Inſtructor; and exhorts him ſtill to proceed, till he arriv'd to Perfection.*

I AM ſo tranſported with Joy, that I again grow vigorous and gay, and ſeem to have a new Warmth infus'd into me in my Old Age, as often as I perceive by what you are doing, and by what you write to me, that you even excel Yourſelf: For as for the Generality of Men, you have long ago ſurpaſs'd them. If a Husbandman rejoices to ſee an Orchard which he planted, to be now repleniſh'd with Fruit; If a Shepherd takes Pleaſure in the happy Increaſe of his Flock; Or if a Foſter-father, upon obſerving his Ward to be now growing up towards Man, is ſo delighted, that he ſeems Himſelf alſo to be a Youth again: What Satisfaction, do you think, muſt it be to thoſe, who having cultivated the *Minds* of Perſons, and form'd and improv'd them even from their tender Years, perceive them of a ſudden come to Maturity? I claim You as my own; You are the Reſult of My Diligence and Care. As ſoon as I ſaw your good Diſpoſition, I ſeiz'd upon you; I exhorted you to purſue the Paths of Virtue; I quick-

I quickened your Pace; and I ſtill incited and ſpurr'd you on, without ever letting you deſiſt from your Purſuit. And I ſtill do the ſame: Tho' now indeed you therein advance ſo ſucceſsfully, that tho' I ſtill exhort you, you are at the ſame time as ſerviceable in exhorting Me.

What then, you will ſay, do I require of you more? I own that you have made a very great Proficiency. But it is not with the Inſtruction of our Minds, as it is with other Works, which, when they are *well begun*, are ſaid to be *half done*. It is a great *Part* of Goodneſs to be deſirous of being good; but ſtill it is but a *Part*. Do you know whom I call a *Good Man?* It is He who is ſo perfect and complete, that no Force or Neceſſity can make him become *Bad*. Such a Man I doubt not but that You will be, if you perſevere in the ſame Courſe, and take diligent Care, that all your Actions and Words may correſpond with one another, like Coins which are ſtruck with the ſame Stamp. For wherever there is a Diſagreement between them, it is a ſure Sign that the Mind is not entirely right, nor the Heart thoroughly ſound.

EPIST. VII.

The ARGUMENT.

Of the true and falſe Nobility. Noblemen and Plebeians are of the ſame Origin. The eager Deſire of the Goods of Fortune is an Impediment to Happineſs.

YOU ſtill complain to me of your *Littleneſs*, and tell me that, firſt, *Nature* was very unkind to you, and then, *Fortune*. I wonder you ſhould uſe ſuch Language, ſince you have it in your own Power to raiſe yourſelf above the Vulgar, and to advance yourſelf to real Happineſs, which is the higheſt and nobleſt Attainment that Men are capable of. There is this particular Advantage in Philoſophy, that it teaches us not to regard Pedigrees. If we ſhould examine into the very firſt Original of all Men, we ſhould find that they are all deſcended from the Gods.

You have arriv'd, thro' your own Induſtry, to the Degree of a *Roman* Knight; and yet here are ſeveral Men as induſtrious and deſerving as You, who cannot attain to that Honour. All worthy Perſons are not admitted to be Senators. And they who would devote themſelves to the Service of the Camp, where there is the greateſt Danger and Toil, are not always treated according to their Merit.

But

But the Way to attain to a ſound Mind, and a good Conſcience, is open to all Men; for this Purpoſe, we are all of us ſufficiently noble. Philoſophy neither rejects nor chuſes any one; it hath Splendour enough for all who will addict themſelves to it. *Socrates* was not a Perſon of Quality. *Cleanthes* was hir'd to draw Water, and work in a Garden. *Plato* was not noble, when he began to ſtudy Philoſophy; it was That which made him ſo. Why then ſhould You diſtruſt your own Ability? Why ſhould you deſpair of becoming equal to Them? All theſe are your Anceſtors, if you behave yourſelf ſo, as to be worthy of them. And this you will be able to do, if without Heſitation you can perſuade yourſelf, that no one ſurpaſſes you in the true and real Nobility.

The Poor have as many Progenitors as the Rich; and there is no one whoſe firſt Origin is not beyond, not only the Memory of Man, but the Records of the moſt diſtant Times. *Plato* ſays, That *there is no King who is not of the Race of Slaves, nor any Slave who did not deſcend from Kings.* Such ſtrange Alterations hath a long Series of Years occaſion'd, and ſuch wonderful Viciſſitudes hath the Inconſtancy of Fortune produc'd!

Who then is a Nobleman, or a Gentleman? He who hath naturally a good Diſpoſition to Virtue. This is all that is to be conſider'd in the Caſe. Otherwiſe, if you would decide it according to the Antiquity

of Families, there is no one ſo mean, whoſe firſt Origin is not as old as this World, which was created out of Nothing. From that firſt Beginning of which, the ſeveral Succeſſions of Men have been continued to the preſent Age, thro' an alternate Series of ſplendid and ſordid Conditions of Life.

This is not what makes a Man noble, to have his Court-Yard full of the Statues of his Anceſtors, which thro' Length of Time are all ſullied with Smoke. The Glory and Reputation which our Forefathers gain'd in the World, they gain'd for Themſelves, and not for Us; nor can any of Their laudable Actions be call'd our Own, which were done before We were born. It is the Mind which makes a Man noble; and by This, a Perſon of whatever State of Life may raiſe himſelf above the Power of Fortune.

Suppoſe then that you was not a Perſon of Quality, but only a Plebeian; yet you would have it in your Power to attain to ſuch Accompliſhments of Mind, as that even in the Company of Perſons of Quality, You only would be truly and really a Gentleman.

But how is this to be effected? It is by rightly diſtinguiſhing between good and evil Things, without regarding the Opinions either of the greater or leſſer Vulgar. We are carefully to conſider, not from what Family Men come, but to what good Purpoſe their Notions and Actions tend. Whatever conſtitutes the Eſſence of a happy Life is good of itſelf,

and

and is incapable of being deprav'd. How comes it then, that Men miſtake the Way to it? It is becauſe, tho' they all deſire a happy Life, yet for the moſt part they miſtake the Inſtruments of it for the Thing itſelf; and thus, whilſt they ſeem to purſue it, they are ſtill flying from it. For inſtead of procuring to themſelves a ſolid Security, and an unſhaken Confidence, in which true Happineſs conſiſts, they are ſo buſied about the external Means of attaining it, that they do but heap up to themſelves Solicitudes and Cares; and whilſt they are going thro' a Way which is full of Ambuſhes, they load themſelves with a greater Burthen than they are able to bear. Thus they deviate ſtill farther from the Point they aim at; the more Pains they take, the more they perplex themſelves; and, like Perſons in a Labyrinth, the greater Haſte they make, the more they are entangled.

EPIST. VIII.

The ARGUMENT.

Seneca *tells* Lucilius, *that the Sight of his Country-Houſe near* Pompeij *recall'd him afreſh to his Mind. Upon which Occaſion, he reflects on the Swiftneſs of Time, and the Folly of ſpending it in Logical Subtleties.*

IT muſt be own'd, my dear *Lucilius*, that it is a Sign that he is a very negligent

Perſon, who does not remember his abſent Friends, unleſs when ſome Object in the Country where he is, recalls them to his Thoughts. And yet our longing Deſire of ſeeing them again, is ſtill infix'd in our Minds; and the Places where we have familiarly convers'd together, do not ſo much *revive* the Memory of them, as if it had been extinct, as *excite* it, as if it had for a while lain dormant within us: As after the Death of a Perſon who was dear to us, the Sight of a Servant who belong'd to him, or of a Robe, or a Houſe of his, renews our Grief for him, tho' Time had now mitigated and appeas'd it. You can ſcarce imagine how much *Campania*, and eſpecially *Naples*, and the Sight of your Country-Houſe near * *Pompeij*, have made me afreſh to regret your Abſence. I ſeem here to have as full and direct a View of you, as I had when I parted with you; when I ſaw you even *drinking* your Tears, and as yet unable to ſtop the Current of thoſe agreeable Teſtimonies of your Affection for me. In ſhort, I ſeem but *juſt now* to have loſt you.

And indeed, what Paſſage of our Lives, if you recollect it, did not happen but *juſt now*? It was but *juſt now* that, being as yet but a

* *Seneca* accompanied *Lucilius* as far as *Pompeij*, a Port-Town of *Campania* in *Italy*, on the Eaſtern Coaſt of the Gulph of *Naples*; where the latter took Ship for *Sicily*, upon his being made *Procurator*, or Deputy-Governor there. It is now called *Caſtel a Mare*.

Boy,

Boy, I went to the School of * *Sotion* the Philoſopher; but *juſt now* that I began to plead Cauſes; but *juſt now* that I grew weary of that Buſineſs; and but *juſt now* that I became unable to purſue it. Time is exceedingly ſwift; as will the more eaſily appear to you, if you look back upon it: For as to that which is preſent, it paſſes away with ſo precipitate a Flight, that we have not Leiſure to conſider it. Do you ask the Reaſon of this? It is becauſe all the Time that is paſs'd, is, as it were, in one Place; you ſee it all at once; it makes but one Heap; and from thence all Things ſink by degrees into the Abyſs of Oblivion. And beſides, there cannot be any long Intervals in a Thing which is ſo ſhort. The Time we live is but a Point, and even leſs than a Point: But Nature, to make it ſeem to be longer, has divided it into ſeveral Parts. One of thoſe Parts ſhe has made to conſiſt of Infancy; another of Childhood; another of Youth; another of Manhood now inclining to Old Age; and another of Old Age itſelf. You ſee how many Degrees ſhe has placed in ſo ſhort a Space. It was but *juſt now* that I attended you to the Port: And yet this *juſt now* is a good Part of our Age, which we ſhould conſider as ſoon coming to an End.

* He was a *Pythagorean*, of whom *Euſebius* thus ſpeaks in his Chronicle: "*Sotion*, the Philoſopher of *Alexandria*, "*Seneca*'s Maſter, flouriſh'd at this Time."

I did

I did not uſe to think Time to be ſo ſwift. But now I am become very ſenſible of its rapid Courſe; whether it be becauſe I perceive myſelf to be advancing very near to the *Goal*; or whether it be becauſe I begin to reflect, that I have not made ſo good an Uſe of it as I ought to have done. And therefore I am the more incens'd againſt thoſe, who ſpend the greateſt Part of it upon ſuperfluous Things, and do not conſider that, let them husband it never ſo well, yet the Whole is ſcarce ſufficient for what it is neceſſary for us to do. *Cicero* ſays, that if he was to live his Life twice over, he ſhould not have Time enough to read the *Lyrick* Poets. I may ſay the ſame of the *Logicians*. Theſe indeed do not trifle with ſo good a Grace, but write in a very heavy and unpleaſant Manner, and yet think that they are doing ſomething of great Importance; whereas Thoſe make an open Profeſſion of only diverting you, and pleaſing your Fancy, without improving your Mind. I don't deny but that Theſe are to be look'd into; but then they are only to be look'd into, and *ſaluted*, as it were, *at the Threſhold*, that ſo we may not be impos'd upon by them, or made to believe that there is ſome very great and advantageous Secret to be learnt of them. To what Purpoſe would it be for you to torment yourſelf about an intricate Queſtion, which you would ſhew more Wit in deſpiſing, than in ſolving? To be gathering up every little Thing, looks as if the Soldier had no

Danger

Danger to apprehend, but might march as it ſuited beſt with his Convenience: Whereas when the Enemy is at his Back, and the Alarm is given in the Camp, he is forc'd to quit the Luggage which he had been heaping up in the Time of Eaſe and Tranquillity. I have no Leiſure to ſearch into the Significations of an ambiguous Word, or to try my Acuteneſs in *diſtinguiſhing* upon it.

Behold what Nations from all Parts unite,
What Cities ſhut their Gates, and whet their Swords *.

The Noiſe of War reſounds all about me, and I muſt fortify myſelf with Courage to hear it. If when the City was beſieged, and the Women and Old Men were carrying Stones for the Defence of the Walls; when they who were able to bear Arms ſtood within the Gates with their Swords in their Hands, expecting or requiring the Signal to be given them for ſallying forth; when the Enemy was raiſing Batteries againſt them, and made the very Ground to tremble under them by their Saps and Mines; ſurely every one would think me to be out of my Wits, if, at ſuch a Time, I ſhould be propoſing ſuch ridiculous Arguments as, amongſt a great many others of the like trifling Nature, is this which follows:

What you have not loſt, you retain:
But Horns you have not loſt:
Therefore Horns you retain.

* *Virg. Æn.* VIII. 385, 386. tranſlated by Dr. *Trapp.*

But

But even now you might think me to be really ſo, if I ſhould ſpend my Time upon ſuch Fooleries, ſince even now I am beſieged; not indeed by a foreign Enemy, from whom the Walls perhaps might protect me; but by a domeſtick Foe, who preys inwardly upon me. And therefore, inſtead of ſuch Sophiſtry, I have much more important Buſineſs to be concern'd about. How ſhall I conduct myſelf in it? *Death* lays Siege to my Heart, and Life is flying from thence. Give me ſome wholſome Advice. Teach me not to fly from Death, nor yet to ſuffer Life to fly away from me unprofitably. Speak to me of the Conſtancy which I ſhould ſhew in Adverſities, and of the Reſolution with which I ſhould arm myſelf againſt Things which are inevitable. Exhort me to be content with the little Time I have to live. Shew me that the Importance of Life does not conſiſt in its Duration, but in the Uſe we make of it; and that it is poſſible, nay that it often happens, that he who has liv'd long, has liv'd but very little. Tell me, when I am going to ſleep, that poſſibly I may never wake again; when I awake, that poſſibly I may ſleep no more; when I am going abroad, that poſſibly I may never return; when I return, that poſſibly I may go no more abroad. You are miſtaken if you think that it is only in a *Ship*, where it is but a very little Diſtance which divides Life from Death. The Space between them is every-where as narrow.

narrow. Death is as near to you in all other Places, tho' in all of them it does not ſo apparently ſhew itſelf to be ſo near. Diſpel this Darkneſs from my Mind. It will be the more eaſy for you to inſtil your Inſtructions into me, becauſe I am prepar'd for them.

Nature has made us docible; and if our Reaſon be as yet imperfect, ſhe has afforded us the Means of perfecting it. Diſcourſe to me then of Juſtice, of Piety, of Frugality, and of Chaſtity; as well That which reſtrains us from attempting to corrupt others, as That which makes us take care that we ourſelves be not corrupted. If you won't miſguide me into a perplex'd and intricate Way, I ſhall the more eaſily arrive at the End which I aim at. *Truth*, ſays the * Tragedian, *ſpeaks without Artifice.* And therefore it ſhould never be involv'd in obſcure and dubious Terms. Such a crafty Diſguiſe is very unſuitable to the great Deſigns of a generous Soul.

* *Euripides* in his Tragedy call'd *Phoeniſſæ.*

EPIST. IX.

The ARGUMENT.

He commends Q. Sextius *the Philoſopher; and ſays, that the ancient Writers on Philoſophy are to be had in Veneration, and yet that We may add ſomething to it.*

YESTERDAY you were with us. You might have had Reaſon to complain, if I had ſaid barely *Yeſterday*; and therefore I added, *With us:* For you are always *with Me*, and I always very affectionately retain you in my Thoughts. I had an unexpected Viſit from ſome of our particular Friends, for whom it was requiſite to make a greater Smoke than ordinary; not ſuch a one, as is wont to break out from the Kitchens of luxurious Men, and to put the Centinels of a City in an Alarm; but ſuch a one, as might at leaſt make the Neighbourhood ſuppoſe that I had ſome Gueſts come to my Houſe. We talk'd of a great many Things, as Friends uſe to do at an Entertainment, paſſing from one Subject to another, without ſettling any particular Point. We then read a Book written by Q. *Sextius* the Elder, who, I aſſure you, is a very great Man, and a *Stoick*, tho' ſome take him to be a *Pythagorean.* Good God! how nervous, how elevated are his Writings! You will not find ſuch a Spirit in

in other Philoſophers. The Productions of ſome of them are quite lifeleſs, and have nothing to recommend them but the great Name of their Sect. They propoſe, they diſpute, they cavil; but they don't in the leaſt improve your Mind, becauſe they have nothing to improve it with. When you read *Sextius*, you will ſay, "He has Life, He has "Vigour, He is entirely *free*, He is more "than Man, He fills me with a wondrous "Reſolution and Courage." As for Myſelf, I frankly confeſs to you, that in whatever Diſpoſition of Mind I am, I no ſooner begin to read Him, than I find myſelf ready to defy all the Adverſities of Life, and to *challenge* Fortune itſelf. I fancy myſelf in the Place of young *Aſcanius*, who wiſhes for an Occaſion to prove and exert his Valour, and,

——— *among th' ignoble Herd*
Of Beaſts, deſires to ſee a foaming Boar,
Or tawny Lion from the Hills deſcend *.

I ſhould thus be glad to meet with ſomething that might try my Fortitude, or elſe exerciſe my Patience. For *Sextius* has this particular Excellence, that whilſt he ſhews you how grand the Happineſs which he propoſes to you is, he at the ſame Time convinces you that it is not impoſſible to arrive at it. He diſcovers it to you ſituated, as it were, upon an *Eminence*, and yet not beyond the Reach

* *Virg. Æn.* IV. 158, 159. tranſlated by Dr. *Trapp.*

of thoſe who are deſirous of attaining it. And indeed, Virtue itſelf is of ſo excellent a Nature, as at once to make you admire the Benefits it conveys, and yet not deſpair of enjoying them.

I muſt acknowledge to you, that I employ a conſiderable Part of my Time upon the Contemplation of Wiſdom. But I look into it with as much Aſtoniſhment, as I behold the World itſelf, which is ſtill a new Spectacle to me. I therefore venerate the Inventions of Wiſdom, together with the Inventors of them; and I gladly ſeize on them, ſince as they are an Inheritance common to many, and as they were cultivated and improv'd for Me as well as for Others, ſo I may juſtly lay claim to my Share in them. But we ſhould act in this Caſe like a diligent Poſſeſſor of an Eſtate; we ſhould enlarge that Inheritance, and tranſmit it to Poſterity much better and richer than we receiv'd it. There is a great deal of Work remains for us to do about it, and a great deal will ſtill remain for thoſe who ſhall come after us; nor will thoſe who ſhall be born many Ages hence, want the Means and Occaſions of adding ſtill ſomething to it.

But ſhould it be granted that our Predeceſſors have left nothing to be invented after them; yet the Manner of uſing Their Inventions, and the Skill in diſpoſing and applying them, will ſtill be new. Suppoſe that they had left us ſuch Medicines to heal the Eyes, as that no better can poſſibly be found out:

All

All that we have to do is to make uſe of them, according as they ſuit with the Diſtemper, and are proper for the particular Time in which they are to be us'd. One of them is good for mollifying a ſharp Humour in the Eyes; another for attenuating a Groſſneſs in the Eye-lids; another for diverting a ſudden Defluxion; and another for clearing the Sight. It is Your Buſineſs to prepare them; to make choice of a proper Time for uſing them; and to know what Quantities are ſuitable for each of them. Thus the Antients have left us Remedies for healing the Soul: And yet it behoves Us to enquire, when and how they are to be applied. They who have gone before us, have done a great deal in this Matter; but they have not brought it to Perfection.

However that be, They are to be had in Admiration, and to be reverenc'd by us as Gods. And if we kept by us Images of them, and celebrated their Nativities, I think theſe would be no improper Means of inciting us to Virtue. At the leaſt we ought always to ſpeak of them with Honour, and to render to thoſe univerſal Inſtructors of Mankind, from whom the Beginnings of ſo much Good have been deriv'd, the ſame Eſteem and Regard which we now pay to our ſeveral Preceptors.

If in the Road we meet with a *Conſul*, or a *Prætor*, we muſt ſhew them all the Demonſtrations of Reſpect which are due to Perſons

Perſons of Their Quality: We muſt alight from our Horſes, and uncover our Heads, and give them the Way. And when *M. Cato*, both the Elder and Younger, when *Lælius* the Wiſe, when *Socrates*, and *Plato*, and *Zeno*, and *Cleanthes* preſent themſelves to our Minds, ſhall we not be affected with the greateſt Regard for them? As for Myſelf, I profeſs that I venerate them, and that whenever their Names are mention'd in my Preſence, I riſe up to do Honour to them.

EPIST. X.

The ARGUMENT.

He takes Occaſion from the Death of Metronactes *the Philoſopher, who died young, to ſhew that Life is to be meaſur'd by good Actions, and not by the Time we have liv'd; and that we have liv'd long enough, when we have liv'd virtuouſly.*

AS ſoon as I had look'd into your Letter, in which you complain of the Death of *Metronactes* the Philoſopher, as if he might and ought to have liv'd longer, I could not but tax you with the Want of Equanimity and Moderation; Qualities for which you have been eminent upon all other Occaſions, tho' in This Particular you are very deficient in them, as indeed all Men are wont to be. I have

I have known many who were juſt and equitable towards Men, but none who in this reſpect were ſo towards the Gods. We are always finding fault with Providence, and thus raſhly expoſtulating: "Why was this Man "ſnatch'd away in the Prime of his Life? "Why does that Perſon ſtill ſurvive him? "Why does he ſtill prolong his Old Age, "which is grown ſo troubleſome to Himſelf, "as well as to Others?" Tell me, I pray, whether you judge it to be more reaſonable that You ſhould obey Nature, or that Nature ſhould obey You?

But why ſhould you be ſolicitous how ſoon you may be forc'd to depart from a Place, from which one Day you muſt certainly depart? We ſhould not concern ourſelves about living long, but about living enough. For in order to live long, you muſt be oblig'd to the particular Favour of Deſtiny; but in order to live enough, you need only to have a virtuous Mind. A Man's Life is then long, when it is complete. Now it is complete, when the Mind has once repos'd its own Happineſs only in itſelf, and has gain'd to itſelf alone the Dominion over itſelf.

Of what Significancy were fourſcore Years to a Perſon, who had ſpent them all in Sloth? Certainly he did not *live*, but only *linger'd* in the World; nor did he die late, but was a long Time in dying. Or ſuppoſing that he did not actually die till the End of fourſcore Years; the Queſtion is, from what Time he did

did not live to any good Purpoſe: And this will make a wide Difference in computing the Years of his Life.

But ſtill you will urge, that *Metronactes* died in the Flower of his Age. Yet conſider, that he had diſcharg'd all the Duties of a good Subject, a good Friend, and a good Son; that upon all Occaſions he was ever active in doing well; and therefore that tho' his Age was imperfect, his Life was perfect and complete. Whereas that other Perſon whom I was ſpeaking to you of, tho' he may be thought to have liv'd fourſcore Years, yet he was only ſo long upon the Earth; unleſs perchance you will ſay that he liv'd in That Senſe, wherein *Trees* alſo may be ſaid to live.

Let us, I beſeech you, my dear *Lucilius*, ſo behave ourſelves, that our Lives, like Jewels, may be conſider'd according to their Value, and not according to their Extent. Let us meaſure them by our Actions, and not by the Time we have liv'd. Would you know the Difference between a Man who being yet in his full Vigour and Strength, had bravely deſpiſed Fortune, and having gone thro' all the Viciſſitudes of human Life with Conſtancy, was at length firmly poſſeſs'd of the ſovereign Good; would you know, I ſay, the Difference between ſuch a Man, and another who paſs'd thro' a long Series of Years in Inactivity and Sloth? The former lives after his Death; and the latter was dead,

even

even before he died. Him then let us praiſe, and Him let us place in the Number of the Bleſſed, who, how little ſoever the Time was which was afforded him to live, yet took care to employ it all well. For he was a Perſon of no ordinary Attainments; he ſaw the true Light thro' the Miſts which obſcur'd it; and he ſtill lives, as he liv'd and flouriſh'd before. He ſhone ſtill bright, whether all was calm and ſerene, or whether, which oftener happen'd, all was ſtormy and tempeſtuous around him. Why do you enquire how long or how ſhort a Time he liv'd, ſince even now alſo he lives, and ſhall live perpetually even in this World, as having tranſmitted his Name to Poſterity, and made himſelf immortal in the Memory of all future Ages?

I ſpeak not this as if I ſhould be unwilling to live long; but this only I ſay, that nothing would have been wanting to me that conſtitutes and completes a happy Life, tho' the Courſe of it had before this Time been cut ſhort. For I never form'd to myſelf any Thoughts of living to any certain Day, or any certain Time, which the fond Hopes of Men are apt to look upon as the laſt Period of their Lives; but I have liv'd every Day as if it were to be my laſt. Why do you ask me in what Year I was born, or whether I am ſtill to be reckon'd young? My Computation of this Matter is very different from that of the Generality of Men. As a Man's Body may be perfect in all its Parts, tho' he be but of a

ſhort Stature; ſo his Life alſo may be perfect, tho' he lives but a ſhort Time.

Age is to be reckon'd amongſt *external* Things. It is not in my own Power to determine how *long* I ſhall live; but it depends upon myſelf to reſolve how *well* I ſhall live, during the Time which is allowed me. This you may juſtly demand of me, that I may not ſpend my Life as it were in Darkneſs, unknown and unſerviceable to the World; that I may not let it ſlip away to no Purpoſe, but that I may live as I ought.

Do you ask what is the moſt conſiderable Space of Life? It is to live till you have acquir'd true Wiſdom. He who has arriv'd to that Point, has attain'd to the fineſt and beſt, tho' not to the *longeſt* Period of Life.

EPIST. XI.

The ARGUMENT.

He communicates to Lucilius *a very pathetical Letter, which he had written to* Marullus *upon the Death of his Child.*

I HAVE here ſent you a Copy of the Letter, which I wrote to *Marullus* upon the Death of his Son, who was as yet but a Child; and upon its being reported that he bore his Loſs with too much Weakneſs and Impatience. I have not herein proceeded according to the uſual

uſual Method upon ſuch Occaſions; ſince I did not think that he ought to be treated gently, but that he deſerv'd rather to be reprimanded than conſol'd. It is true, that when a Perſon is too deeply afflicted upon having ſuſtain'd a very great Loſs, we ſhould let him indulge his Grief, till he is either ſatiated with it, or at leaſt till he has given Vent to the firſt Tranſports of it. But when a Man makes it his *Buſineſs*, as it were, to lament his Misfortune, he ought preſently to be reprov'd, and to be taught that there is a great deal of Trifling and Impertinence even in Tears.

You expect perhaps that I ſhould *conſole* you, whereas I am going to *rebuke* you. Are you ſo weak as to bear the Death of a *Child* no better? What would you have done if you had been depriv'd of a *Friend?* You have loſt a little Child, from whom you could not promiſe yourſelf any certain Comfort; and the little Time you have ſpent in providing for his Nouriſhment and Support, is alſo loſt to you. Thus diligently do we ſeek after Reaſons for our Grief, and thus unjuſtly do we complain of Fortune; as if ſhe could not give us juſt Occaſions for Complaint! I had verily perſuaded myſelf that you had Courage enough to bear you up even againſt *real* Evils, and much more againſt thoſe which are only ſo *in Appearance*, and under which moſt Men bemoan themſelves merely in compliance with Cuſtom.

If you had loſt a *Friend*, which indeed is one of the greateſt Loſſes we can ſuſtain, you ought rather to rejoice that you had him, than to be ſorry that you are depriv'd of him. But moſt Men do not compute what Advantages they have receiv'd, nor how long they have enjoy'd them. Grief has, amongſt a great many others, this particular Evil attending it, that it is not only unprofitable, but alſo ingrateful. In ſuch a Caſe I might ſay, Is all the Time then loſt to you, in which you enjoy'd ſo good a Friend? Have you gain'd nothing in ſo many Years from the intimate Converſation which you have had with him, and from the agreeable Studies which you have familiarly purſu'd together? Is your Friendſhip alſo buried with him? Why do you bewail the Loſs of him, if no Profit accrued to you from the Enjoyment of him?

Believe me, a great Share of thoſe whom we lov'd, and whom Death hath ſnatched from us, is ſtill remaining with us. All the Time which is paſs'd, doth ſtill belong to us; and there is nothing that we can be more aſſured of, than of that which *has* been. The Hope of future Enjoyments makes us unthankful for thoſe which we have already receiv'd; as if thoſe future ones, if ever they come, will not at length alſo be plac'd in the Number of thoſe which are paſs'd. It is within a very narrow Compaſs that He limits the Satisfaction which he takes in any Good, who rejoices in it only whilſt it is preſent.

Both

Both that which is to come, and that which is paſt, are capable of affording us Pleaſure; the former by the Hope of enjoying it, and the latter by the Remembrance of our having enjoy'd it. But that which is to come is doubtful, and poſſibly may never arrive; whereas that which *has* been, muſt neceſſarily have been. What a Folly then is it, to abandon that which is certain? Let us therefore acquieſce in the Advantages which we have already had; unleſs perchance we ſo negligently receiv'd them, as to let them ſlip out of our Minds, at the ſame Time that they entred in.

We have a great many Inſtances of Fathers, who have attended at the Funerals of their Sons, now grown towards Men, without ſo much as ſhedding a Tear; who have gone directly from the Grave to the Senate, or to the Diſcharge of ſome publick Office, ſome much more important Concern, than that of bewailing their private Loſs. And certainly, ſuch a Grief muſt needs be ſuperfluous, ſince you can gain nothing by it. Beſides, it is unjuſt to complain of what has befallen to one particular Perſon, ſince the ſame muſt be the Lot of all Men. And farther, all ſuch impatient Regrets are but fooliſh and weak, ſince there is ſo ſmall a Space between the Death of Him who is mourn'd for, and that of the Mourner himſelf. You ought therefore to be the more contented with the

Loſs

Loſs of your Child, becauſe you muſt ſpeedily follow him.

Conſider the great Swiftneſs, or rather the extreme Rapidity of Time. Think of the Shortneſs of the *Courſe*, which we all ſo quickly run. Repreſent to yourſelf that vaſt Train of Mankind, who are all tending the ſame Way, and between whom the Diſtances, even where they ſeem to be largeſt, are, upon a cloſer Obſervation, but little and inconſiderable. He whom you think you have loſt, is only gone before you. And ſince You alſo muſt take the ſame Journey, is it not a Folly to lament for Him, who has been ſomewhat more expeditious than You? Is it not very imprudent for a Man to be extremely concern'd for an Event, which he knew muſt certainly come to paſs? Or if he did not imagine that ſuch or ſuch a Perſon would die, he fondly impos'd upon himſelf. Does he then deplore an Event, which, upon other Occaſions, he has often ſaid was inevitable? Whoever complains of a Perſon's being dead, complains of his having deſcended from the Race of Men. It is the univerſal Condition of Humanity, that whoever is born, muſt alſo die. We are diſtinguiſh'd from one another by ſome Intervals of Time, but we are all alike with reſpect to our End. All that Space, which is between the firſt and the laſt Day of Life, is variable and uncertain. If you meaſure it by its Miſeries, it is doubt-

doubtleſs very long, even in the Time of Childhood; but if by its Swiftneſs, it is queſtionleſs very ſhort, even in the Seaſon of Old Age. There is nothing in all that Space, which is not ſlippery and deceitful, and more inconſtant than the Weather. All Things therein are in a perpetual Motion, and, according as Fortune orders it, they ſoon paſs from one Extreme to another. Amidſt all theſe Revolutions of human Affairs, we have no certain Proſpect of any Thing but Death: And yet all Men complain of that only Thing, in which no one can finally be deceiv'd.

But your Son, you will ſay, departed when he was ſtill but a little Child. I do not as yet inſiſt, that the more early a Perſon dies, the more favourably he is dealt with. At preſent let us paſs on to Him who is now grown old. By how little a Space has he exceeded your Child? Think of the profound Abyſs of Time; conſider the immenſe Ocean of Eternity; and compare it with that which is called the Age of Man: You will then perceive how ſhort that Term is, which we ſo eagerly wiſh for, and which we take ſo much Pains to prolong. How much of it is taken up with Sorrows and Cares? how much with wiſhing for Death before it comes? how much with Sickneſs and Fear? how much with that tender Seaſon, which is incapable of being employ'd upon any uſeful Buſineſs? how much afterwards with wearifome Toils? how much with mourning for

for the Death of Relations? and how much with the hazardous Circumſtances of Life? Not to mention, that a very conſiderable Part of it is ſpent in Sleep. All which will ſufficiently convince you, that even in the longeſt Life, it is but a very little Space, in which Men truly live.

But is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that He is the moſt happy, who is permitted very ſoon to return to the Country from whence he came, and who has finiſh'd his Voyage before he grew weary of it? Life in itſelf is neither evil nor good: It is only a State of Exiſtence which may poſſibly tend either to Good or Evil. And therefore your Child has loſt nothing but his *Chance* in Life, which much oftener proves unfortunate than happy. He might indeed, by Your diligent Care, have come to be a very modeſt and diſcreet, a very ſober and virtuous Man; or he might, which is more juſtly to be apprehended, have been like a great many other young Gentlemen of this Age. Do but reflect how many Youths of the beſt Families have by Luxury been reduc'd to a State of Meanneſs and Wretchedneſs, and been forc'd to turn *Gladiators*, or Prize-fighters; how many of them make it their whole Buſineſs to render others as lewd and debauch'd as themſelves; and how many of them let no Day paſs, without intoxicating themſelves with Wine, and doing ſome notorious Miſchief: And then you will readily acknowledge, that you would have had

had much more Reaſon to be *afraid* than to *hope* for your Son's Welfare.

You ought not then to ſeek Occaſions for exciting your Grief, nor to add freſh Weight to the Load, which of itſelf is eaſy to be borne. I do not exhort you to exert your utmoſt Strength; I have a much better Opinion of you than to think, that you need to call forth all the Succours of Virtue, to enable you to ſupport your Loſs. It is not a *Wound* which you have receiv'd; it is only a little *Cut*, which you would fain turn to a *Wound*. Surely you muſt have made a wonderful Proficiency in Philoſophy, if you thus courageouſly bear the Death of a Child, who was not yet ſo well known to his Father, as he was to his Nurſe!

Would I then, you will ſay, perſuade you to be hard-hearted, and utterly inſenſible of the Impreſſions of Grief? Would I have had you appear, even at his Funeral, with a Countenance not at all caſt down? and do I forbid you to be affected with the leaſt Degree of Sorrow for the Loſs of him? No certainly: This is what I did not expect from you. It would be Inhumanity, and not Virtue, to be entirely unconcern'd, when Death firſt ſeparates our Friends from us; and to ſee their Funerals with the ſame chearful Aſpect, with which heretofore, during their Health, we beheld their Perſons.

But, ſuppoſe that I enjoin'd you to be thus inſenſible: Yet there are ſome Emotions,

which upon ſuch Occaſions it is not altogether in our Power to reſtrain. Some Tears will fall from us, tho' we do our utmoſt Endeavour to ſtop the Current of them. And indeed, to ſhed them freely, gives ſome Eaſe and Satisfaction to our Minds. We may therefore *permit*, but we ſhould not *command* them to fall. Let them flow as much as natural Affection may require, but not ſo much as an Imitation of the abſurd Cuſtoms of the World may demand. Let us not add any thing to our Sorrow, nor increaſe it by following the ridiculous Examples of Others.

The *Appearance* of Grief is generally more inſiſted upon at preſent, than any real Expreſſions of it. How few indeed are there, who are ſorrowful when they are alone? They ſigh aloud, when they think that they are heard; and tho' in private they are calm and unmov'd, yet when they are ſurpriz'd by Company, they immediately renew their Weeping. Then do they begin to tear their Hair; which they might the more eaſily have done, while there was no one to hinder them. Then vainly do they wiſh for Death, and throw themſelves wildly upon the Bed: But no ſooner are the Spectators gone, than their Sorrow is at an End.

To conform ourſelves to the Examples of Others, is a Fault which we are generally guilty of, as upon other Occaſions, ſo particularly upon This. We don't ſo much conſider what we *ought* to do, as what Men

uſually

uſually do. We depart from Nature, and follow the Humour of the Multitude, which never acts according to ſound and right Principles, and which is as inconſtant in this very Thing, as it is in all Things elſe. Does it ſee a Man patiently bear the Death of a Friend or Relation? it calls him barbarous and unnatural. Does it ſee him fainting away, and falling upon the dead Body? it calls him weak and effeminate. And therefore we ſhould meaſure all Things according to Reaſon, and not according to the Fancy of the People.

But there is nothing more fooliſh, than to pretend to get a Reputation by our Sorrow, and to make ourſelves eſteem'd upon the Account of our Tears. And yet I cannot but judge, that ſome are *permitted* to fall even from a *Wiſe Man*, and that ſome will *neceſſarily* flow from him. There is this Difference between them. When we firſt hear of the Death of a Perſon who was dear to us, or when his Body is ſhortly to be carried from our Embraces to the Grave, there is a natural Neceſſity which forces Tears from us: The Soul at that Time being vehemently ſtruck and affected with Grief, does alſo violently influence and oppreſs the whole Body, and conſequently the Eyes, and by that Preſſure conſtrains the watry Humour to guſh from them: And thus theſe Tears are extorted from us, even againſt our Wills. The other Sort of them are thoſe, which we volun-

tarily allow ourſelves to ſhed, when the Perſons whom we have loſt, and whom we lov'd, happen to be remembred in Company. There is ſomething ſweet and agreeable in this Kind of Sorrow; and when their chearful and pleaſing Converſation occurs to us, together with the good Offices they have done us, our Eyes are diſſolv'd into Tears as it were of *Joy*. This latter Sort of them we freely indulge, and the former we are unable to reſtrain.

There is then no Occaſion for you, either to ſqueeze Tears from your Eyes, or to endeavour to ſtifle them, upon the Account of your having Spectators to obſerve you. It is much more ſhameful to counterfeit them, than it is either entirely to dry them up, or to let them profuſely flow. Let them fall of themſelves, and without Artifice; and this they may do, even when Men are calm and compos'd. The *Wiſe Man* himſelf has often thus ſhed them, without derogating from his Dignity; and herein he has preſerv'd ſo juſt a Temperament, as not to be deficient either in Humanity or Decency. We may therefore obey the Impulſes of Nature, and yet retain a due Gravity. I have ſeen Men look very venerable at the Funeral of their Relations, and ſhew by their Countenances the great Love they had for them, without any of the formal Appearances of Grief, which are uſual with Mourners. Nothing more was obſervable in them, than what a true and real

Affection

Affection is wont to produce. There is then in this Sorrow a certain Gracefulneſs, which the *Wiſe Man* will ſtill keep; and, as in all other Things, he will obſerve a Mediocrity in Tears alſo. Whereas the Weak and Imprudent are always immoderate, whether in their Grief, or in their Joy.

Receive with Patience what was neceſſarily to come to paſs. Is it any Thing marvellous, or new? How many pompous Funerals are even now to be prepar'd? How many Perſons are even now in the Agonies of Death? And how many Fathers, when You ſhall have ceaſed to mourn, will be but juſt beginning to lament their Children departed? As often as you ſhall reflect that your Son was but a *Child*, reflect alſo that he was mortal; that a *Man* alſo, who is ſtill but mortal, can promiſe himſelf no certain Term of Life; that Fortune does not ſurely bring him to Old Age, but that ſhe diſmiſſes him whenever ſhe pleaſes.

I do not forbid you to *talk* frequently of your Child: On the contrary, I would have you celebrate his Memory as much as you can. And oftener ſtill let That recur to your *Thoughts*, provided it be without Sadneſs and Grief. For no one would freely chuſe to converſe with a ſorrowful Perſon, much leſs with Sorrow itſelf. If with Pleaſure you have heard His innocent Prattle, or his ſeemingly *witty* Expreſſions, you may oft' with Pleaſure repeat them; and withal, you may ſtrongly

perſuade

perſuade yourſelf, that at length he would fully have anſwer'd the Hopes, which paternal Love had made you conceive of him.

It is indeed an Inſtance of great Inhumanity to *forget* one's Children, and to bury their Memories in the ſame Tomb with their Bodies; to weep immoderately for them at firſt, and then think no more of them. It is thus that Birds, and thus that wild Beaſts ſhew their Love for their young ones: At firſt it is violent, and, as it were, furious; but when They are utterly loſt, it preſently vaniſhes away. This does not become a *Wiſe Man:* He ſhould ſtill remember his Children departed, but he ſhould ſoon ceaſe to bewail them *.

Thus much, my dear *Marullus*, I thought proper to write to you; tho' now perhaps you do not want ſuch Lenitives to aſſwage your Grief: For I doubt not but that, before this Time, you have of your own Accord entertain'd and conſol'd yourſelf with whatever I have here preſcrib'd to you. But my principal Intention was, to chide you for having been ſo much dejected, as, during a ſhort Seaſon, to be utterly incapable of adminiſtring any Comfort to Yourſelf; and withal, to exhort you, for the future, to arm

* The Tranſlator has here omitted an abſtruſe Quotation from *Metrodorus* the *Stoick*, who is entirely for extirpating the Paſſions, and from whom *Seneca* differs in this Point; as likewiſe at the End of the foregoing Epiſtle, ſome Notions purely *Stoical*, not to ſay abſurd, are omitted in the Tranſlation.

yourſelf with greater Courage to bear up againſt the Aſſaults of Fortune, and to look upon all her Weapons, not as if they might *poſſibly* reach you, but as if they would *certainly* fall upon you.

EPIST. XII.

The ARGUMENT.

He comforts Lucilius *upon hearing that his Slaves had run away; and from thence takes Occaſion to reflect upon the Uncertainty of all human Affairs, and to recommend Patience and Reſignation in all Events.*

WHITHER is all your Prudence now gone? Where is your uſual Sagacity in prying into the Tempers of People? Or where is your wonted Greatneſs of Mind? Do ſuch little Things diſturb you? Your *Slaves*, it ſeems, whilſt you were engag'd in a Multiplicity of Buſineſs, took the Opportunity of running away. What if your *Friends* had deceiv'd you? ſuch I mean, as * *Epicurus* is pleas'd to honour with that

* It was the Opinion of the *Stoicks*, that only *Wiſe Men* were capable of Friendſhip, and that Others were only *Companions* to one another, who were join'd together merely for the ſake of *Profit*: Whereas *Epicurus* allows *Profit* to be the main Motive of contracting it, as we ſow the Ground in Expectation of a good Crop.

Title:

Title: What Damage would it have been to you to have loſt ſuch Friends? You might eaſily have parted with them, ſince they have put you to ſo much Trouble, and made you ſo troubleſome to Others upon Their Accounts. In either of theſe Caſes, there is nothing very extraordinary, nothing but what has frequently happened. To be offended at ſuch Things is as ridiculous, as it would be to complain becauſe, in paſſing thro' the Streets, you have chanc'd to be daſh'd with Water, or dirtied with Mire. We muſt expect the like Treatment in Life, as we do at Baths, in a Crowd, or in the High-Way: Some Things may be thrown at us on purpoſe, and ſome may accidentally light upon us. Life is a Thing in which we are not to look for ſo much Niceneſs. You have entred upon a tedious Journey; and in purſuing it, you muſt ſometimes ſlip, and ſometimes totter; ſometimes you muſt fall, and ſometimes be quite tir'd; ſo as to be induc'd to cry out, *O Death!* that is, to belie your Conſcience, ſince you will ſtill have a Deſire to live. At This Place you will leave a Companion; at That you will bury another; and at That you will be afraid of a third. A great many ſuch Inconveniences we muſt meet with, in this rough and troubleſome Road. And does Death await us in our Progreſs? We muſt fortify our Minds againſt all Events, and conſider that we are come into a World, in which we hear the Thun-

Thunders rattle around us, and in which we every-where ſee, that

> *Sorrow, revengeful Cares, Diſeaſes pale,*
> *And querulous Old Age, their Couches place* *.

It is with ſuch Company that we muſt be forc'd to ſojourn. We cannot poſſibly avoid it. And yet we ſhall not be diſturbed by it, if we often think of, and, as it were, *anticipate* what is to come. The greater Courage we ſhall have to encounter with Difficulties, when we have long prepar'd ourſelves for them; and the better Reſiſtance we ſhall make againſt them, when we have for ſome Time expected to engage with them. On the contrary, when a Man is wholly unprepar'd againſt the croſs Accidents of Life, the leaſt Danger and Diſtreſs is apt to diſmay and confound him.

You ſhould therefore take diligent Care, that nothing unthought of may happen to you: And ſince Evils fall the more heavy upon us, when they are new and unexpected; to meditate thus upon them will at leaſt produce this Effect, that you will not, upon any Occaſion, behave yourſelf like a raw and unexperienc'd Soldier in this Warfare of Life.

Your Slaves, you ſay, have run away from you. But have not Slaves alſo robbed this Perſon, accus'd another, kill'd another, betray'd another, trampled upon another, attack'd

* *Virg. Æn.* VI. 274, 275.

another by Poiſon, and another by Calumny? What you complain of, has been the Misfortune of many before you, and will be of many after you. How various are the Evils which threaten us, and how many Darts are levell'd againſt us? Some ſeem already to pierce us; ſome even now are tending ſwiftly towards us; and ſome, which were aim'd at another Perſon, are juſt glancing upon us.

Let us not be aſtoniſh'd at any of thoſe Things, which we were born to endure; which no Man ought to complain of, becauſe they equally belong to all Men: *Equally*, I ſay, ſince even what ſome one has happily eſcap'd, he might poſſibly have ſuffer'd. Beſides, a Law is juſt and equal, not becauſe all Men find the Effect of it, but becauſe it was made for all Men. Let us then be govern'd by Equity; and let us without murmuring pay the Tributes, which are impos'd upon human Nature.

The Winter brings cold Weather; we muſt therefore be cold. The Summer returns with Heat; we muſt therefore be hot. The unwholſome Air attacks our Health; we muſt therefore be ſick. In one Place, a wild Beaſt may meet us; and in another, a Man more cruel and inſatiable than all wild Beaſts. Water may take from us one Thing, and Fire another. It is not in our Power to alter this State and Condition of Things: But This is in our Power, to arm ourſelves with ſuch Magnanimity, as is worthy of a good Man; ſuch

ſuch as will make us patiently receive the adverſe Occurrences of Life, and readily comply with the Decrees of Nature.

It is Nature itſelf, which by perpetual Changes governs this grand Empire, which we ſee all around us. Thus after cloudy Weather the Sky becomes clear, and after a Calm the Sea grows rough. The Winds thus blow by Turns, and the Day ſucceeds the Night. Thus one Part of the Heaven is above us, while the other is below us. And thus Eternity itſelf, if this World were to be eternal, would be compos'd of contrary Things.

To this Law we ſhould accommodate our Minds, this we ſhould follow, and this we ſhould obey; and whatever comes to paſs in the Courſe of this World, we ſhould perſuade ourſelves that it *ought* to come to paſs, and ſhould not dare to find fault with Nature. It is beſt to endure what we cannot alter, and to conform ourſelves willingly to the Orders of that God, who is the great *Author* of Nature, and the ſupreme Diſpoſer of all Things.

He is but a cowardly Soldier, who follows his General with Tears in his Eyes. Let us then receive the Commands of God with Courage and Alacrity. Let us not deſert Him in purſuing the admirable Schemes of his Providence, in which whatever we ſuffer is, as it were, *interwoven*. And let us addreſs ourſelves to Him, who directs the whole Machine

chine of this World, as *Cleanthes* does in theſe religious Strains:

Conduct me, mighty Lord of Heav'n and Earth,
And univerſal Parent of Mankind,
Where-e'er Thou pleaſeſt; I obey thy Will,
I follow uncompell'd. Thy Will is Fate;
Which, tho' reluctant, I muſt ſtill obey.
But O! 'tis better to ſubmit to Fate,
Chearful, reſign'd, in all the Toils of Life,
Than by Impatience to increaſe the Pain *.

Thus let us ſpeak, and thus let us live. Let Fate always find us prepar'd, and diligently obſervant of its Call. It is an Argument of a great and generous Soul, to reſign one's ſelf entirely to the Will of Heaven: Whereas, on the contrary, it is an Indication of a baſe and degenerate Spirit, for a Man to ſtrive againſt God, to cenſure his Government of the World, and to tax Providence with Partiality and Injuſtice, rather than rectify his own partial and unjuſt Opinions of it.

* The *Greek* Verſes of *Cleanthes* are preſerv'd in *Epictetus*'s *Enchiridion*, Chap. 77. *Seneca* in this Epiſtle tranſlated hem into *Latin* Verſes.

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